

“The congruence with Jesus’ life is remarkable—so remarkable that those who deny the possibility of predictive prophecy have had to say that Jesus consciously modeled himself on Isaiah’s Servant to make it appear that he was the fulfillment of that prophecy” (Oswalt 2003: 588).

“On the one hand this looks like a terrible perversion of justice, but on the other hand it was part of God’s unbelievable plan to transfer the guilt of many to this innocent Servant. He functioned as a substitute who took the penalty for others, and through this act he justified many (53:11). In spite of the unjust treatment of this Servant, this amazing story has a surprising and positive ending, for the Servant’s substitutionary role caused the will of God to be accomplished (53:10). This suffering Servant will not only live again and see the light (53:11); he will be exalted again because he bore the sins of many (53:12)” (Smith 2009: 465).

“Many, many facets of the Servant’s character are revealed in this Song. He is sage, priest, sacrifice, servant, sufferer, conqueror and intercessor. He is the channel of God’s grace to sinners. In him the holiness and mercy of God are perfectly reconciled. He is the key to all God’s plans for his people and for the world” (Webb 1996: 214).

“It is shocking to think that the righteous highly exalted royal Messiah was asked by God to intervene on behalf of terrible people all over the world by giving up his life to pay for the sins of others” (Smith 2009: 465).

“As a result of all of this, this twisted, forgotten, broken man will one day wear the victor’s wreath, and all the other victors will throw theirs down at his feet” (Oswalt 1998: 400).

“The message of this fourth Servant Song is for transgressors everywhere. All they have to do is to admit that that is what they are” (Webb 1996: 214).

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Compare the hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 to this fourth Servant Song. What are the similarities?

Consider how Jesus was the Suffering Servant by looking up Luke 22:37; John 1:29; Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3-4; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 1:19; 1 John 3:5.

Have you accepted the Servant’s death for your sins?

## ISAIAH 53:10-12: THE TRIUMPH OF THE SERVANT

### OUTLINE OF THE FOURTH SERVANT SONG (52:13-53:12)

A The **paradox** of the servant (52:13-15)

B The **rejection** of the servant (53:1-3)

C The **sacrifice** of the servant (53:4-6)

B The **death** of the servant (53:7-9)

A The **triumph** of the servant (53:10-12)

### OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 53:10-12

The Servant’s suffering was by God’s design (53:10a)

The Servant’s suffering is not the end (53:10b)

The Servant’s suffering will bring him satisfaction (53:11a)

The Servant’s suffering will justify many (53:11b)

The Servant’s suffering will bring him a great reward (53:12)

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## NOTES

“Today people in the Christian community are very much aware that the New Testament saw the death of Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy. People know about modern concepts of atonement and have little trouble believing in a glorified Servant who first suffered and died because the New Testament interprets it that way. But in the time of the prophets this was a rather unique and strange idea that earlier prophets had never spoken about. . . . The newness of this thought, the wonder of this fascinating paradox, and the mysteriousness of a vicarious royal Messiah needs to reenter the picture anew if people today hope to struggle with the profoundness and the glory of the newness of the theological ideas proposed in this prophecy” (Smith 2009: 464).

“This final stanza of the poem answers many of the questions that have been raised thus far. . . . Above all, the question has been, What is the meaning of this innocent man’s submissive suffering in the place of sinners? Why is he doing it, and how can he do it? Is it all an accident of history?” (Oswalt 1998: 400).

“This final stanza is like a reservoir into which flow all the main lines of thought developed throughout the poem, but its chief links are with the first (52:13–15) and the third (53:4–6) stanzas” (Motyer 1993: 436–37).

“Isaiah does not use the word ‘resurrection’, but these verses display the Servant ‘alive after his suffering’ (Acts 1:3). . . . The dead (9) is alive (10), the condemned (8) is righteous (11), the helpless (7) is the victor (12)” (Motyer 1999: 381).

“God wanted to crush (cf. v. 5) this man? God wanted to visit terrible pain (cf. v. 4) on him? Surely not. The faithful God of the Bible would certainly not visit bad things on innocent people, would he? Yes, he would if some greater good would be served” (Oswalt 1998: 400).

“He was not merely suffering as a result of his people’s sin, nor was he merely suffering with his people; he was suffering *for* their sin, so that the unpaid debt could be satisfied” (Oswalt 1998: 401).

“Suffering great pain, being pierced and beaten, suffering for others’ failures, and bearing the guilt that belongs to others may not sound like a successful life; but if this pleases God and it is his will, a true servant will lay down his life for others. Success in God’s eyes does not relate to the

money, praise, position, status, or worldly success that a person gains for himself” (Smith 2009: 460).

“Isaiah 53:11 is one of the fullest statements of atonement theology ever penned. (i) The Servant knows the needs to be met and what must be done. (ii) As ‘that righteous one, my servant’ he is both fully acceptable to the God our sins have offended and has been appointed by him to his task. (iii) As righteous, he is free from every contagion of our sin. (iv) He identified himself personally with our sin and need. (v) The emphatic pronoun ‘he’ underlines his personal commitment to this role. (vi) He accomplishes the task fully. Negatively, in the bearing of iniquity; positively, in the provision of righteousness” (Motyer 1993: 442).

“It is only when Redemption is fully completed that ‘He shall see’ a glorious completed church ‘without spot or wrinkle’; a restored and converted Israel which shall bear upon itself the inscription ‘Holiness unto Jehovah,’ and be ‘the priests of Jehovah’ and the willing ‘ministers’ of God in diffusing the blessings of their Messiah’s gospel among all nations; a world which shall be ‘filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea’; and a new heaven and a new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness for evermore. Yes, He shall see all this as the outcome of the travail of His soul, *and be satisfied*” (Baron 2000: 129).

“‘The many’ is Isaiah’s keyword for those whom the Servant designed to save: what Jesus calls ‘all that the Father gives me’ (John 6:37). Over these he casts the robe of his own righteousness” (Motyer 1999: 382).

“It is probable that this passage was in the mind of our Saviour when, on the night of His betrayal, He took the cup and said to His disciples, ‘This is my blood of the New Covenant which is poured out *for many*’ (Matt 26:28), and it is almost certain that it was in the mind of the Apostle Paul when writing Romans 5:12–21” (Baron 2000: 132).

“In this context *Therefore* brings to mind Phil. 2:9. In faithfulness the Servant has descended to the lowest depths. He has fulfilled his Father’s will to the last degree. Because of that faithful obedience, God will exalt him to the highest heights (cf. 52:13). The picture is of a victory parade with the Servant, of all people, marching in the role of conqueror, bringing home the spoils of conquest” (Oswalt 1998: 405).

“He made “many” righteous and he will divide spoil with “many.” Why? Because he *bore* (i.e., took away) the sin of “many”!” (Oswalt 1998: 406).